

## EDITORIAL

### Migration and Human Security in the Balkans

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Over the past decades, migration flows worldwide and particularly Europe-wide have been growing considerably. Since the 1970s there is a move towards restricting migratory flows coupled with continued migration pressures which led to an increase of immigrants who are considered unwanted or bogus. This caused internal inconsistencies in older destination countries which questioned the presence of immigrants already resident in them, but also inaugurated a contradiction due to the continuation of immigration flows (Geddes, 2003).

Moreover, older destination countries have sought for exporting their immigration policies and practices to newer immigration countries. It is the case that southern, eastern and central European countries are urged to adhere to the immigration, asylum and internal security pre-requisites of the *acquis communautaire*. Following the Treaty of Amsterdam, immigration became a major issue on the European agenda. In October 1999 the European Council held a special meeting in Tampere where there was an invitation “to develop common policies on asylum and immigration”. The subsequent European Councils showed a deceleration in asylum and immigration policy. The main reason was that member states were not ready to abdicate from their own prerogatives of national sovereignty by keeping control of immigration policy. In 2004 the so-called *The Hague Programme*, fixed the new deadline 2010 for the adoption of a common asylum and immigration policy. The vehicle to achieve this deadline was a policy plan on legal migration including admission procedures capable of responding

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promptly to fluctuating demands of migrant labour in the labour market. By 2005, the European Council adopted the Global Approach to Migration which elaborates coherent policies and action on migration (CEC, 2006).

The securitization of EU immigration policy is related to the politicization and 'externalization' of migratory issues. This development has created a number of misunderstandings and misconceptions of the migratory flows in the Balkan area. Meanwhile, the collection of papers in this special issue has the objective to stimulate an in-depth discussion over the migration-security nexus in the Balkans, raising a number of controversial issues, a number of which have been raised by scholars at the EU level (Huysmans, 2006; Faist, 2004; van Munster and Sterkx, 2006; Karyotis, 2007).

### **The Securitization of EU Migration Policy and its Impact on the Balkans**

Since the 1970s, immigration has been increasingly a subject of public concern, while more control-oriented, restrictive policies gradually displaced a previously permissive immigration policy. An important early development in the EU is the distinction between the right of free movement of nationals of member states and the right of free movement of nationals from third countries. Later, by the mid-1980s, immigration started being politicized due to the fusion of immigration and asylum by presenting asylum as an alternative route for economic immigration. Meanwhile, there is a significant Europeanization of migration policy. A large part of the migratory agenda has been formulated in inter-governmental fora such as Trevi, the Ad Hoc Group on Immigration (AHGI) and the Schengen group and at a later stage they were incorporated into the constitutional structure of the EU (Huysmans, 2000; Samers, 2004). The Maastricht Treaty (1992) introduced a Third Pillar on Justice and Home Affairs in which migration was a subject of intergovernmental regulation, but with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) the issues relating to immigration, asylum and refugees were transferred to the First Pillar. There has been a

'communitarization' of immigration and asylum policies which do not imply that those policies were 'supranationalised' (Geddes, 2003).

Being primarily occupied with internal security, these inter-governmental fora structured the development of migration policy with a clear focus on the security dimension, creating thus a continuum between crime, drug-trafficking, terrorism and immigration (Karyotis, 2007). However, migration policy was moving towards a common path through the articulation of institutional mechanisms and measures which pursued shared objectives. As the Europeanization of migration issues and policy measures gained momentum, there is a greater emphasis on the need for restrictions of migration flows and for reducing the number of applications of asylum seekers. Both needs are legitimized by the prevailing security logic. Migration has turned to a security issue due to the integration of the human security discourse in European migration and asylum policy.

The human security, which emerged in the field of international relations as a progressive approach reflecting the agenda of the post-Cold War period as well as the challenges following the decline of the state-centred international system, has gained a normative status in the human development discourses developed by international organizations (Burgess *et al.*, 2007). The human security approach has infused the concept of "societal security" into the political economy of international migration (Rudolph, 2003), which effectively led to the classification of a wide range of issues under the security agenda. Moreover, asylum seekers, human trafficking, human smuggling, illegal immigration, transnational crimes and illegal practices are all integrated into a common platform which raises security issues (Wiener 1992/3; Choucri, 2002; Collier, 2006).

There emerged the securitization of migration in the EU which is based on political, societal, criminological and economic concerns of the public (Huysmans, 2006; Karyotis, 2007). Securitization means that migration has turned into problem; it is "an issue to gain control over it", the elites de-

clared it to be so and as a process it creates a mechanism which turns threats into challenges (Waeber, 1995). Meanwhile, security is a social construction due to the fact that it is based on “speech acts” (Wiener, 1992/3). Despite the severe theoretical and empirical critique to the securitization of migration in the EU (Ibrahim, 2005; Karyotis, 2007), there are important repercussions of this discourse on the conceptualization as well as on the treatment of migration issues in such regions as the Balkans.

The basic reasoning which shows the path of EU migration policy is that if free movement of people is supported and internal controls are diminished, then there should be a harmonization and strengthening of control at the external borders of the EU to guarantee a sufficient level of control. This concern of the EU for external security is transformed to cooperation with sending and transit countries. This target implies two rather distinct approaches: a) the externalization of traditional tools of domestic and/or EU migration control which engages sending and transit countries in expanding border controls, combating illegal entry, migrant smuggling and trafficking, and/or readmitting migrants who have entered the EU borders illegally; and b) the use of “preventive” mechanisms, which includes attempts to address the causes of migration and refugee flows (Boswell, 2003).

Following the externalization of migration policies, the boundaries of the EU are (re)drawn as an area of freedom, security and justice. The third-country nationals have become increasingly described as a category of people who need to be controlled in order to preserve the internal and external security of the EU. There are three strategies for obtaining the so-called externalization of migration policies. First, it is the strategy of ‘remote control’ which refers to the transfer of border controls to third countries and/or border countries. Second, there is the ‘remote protection’ which attaches increased emphasis on the extra-territorial dimension of the protection of refugees. Third, there is an emphasis on capacity building in certain sending and transit countries which mainly include transfer of know-how, surveillance

technologies, equipment and institutions (van Munster and Sterkx, 2006; Samers, 2004). All in all, these strategies aim at “policing at a distance” and, more importantly, “policing in the name of freedom” (Bigo and Guild, 2005). The securitization and externalization of migration policy does not only aim at introducing some technical and managerial innovations, but also it represents a new way of imagining and ordering the European space by (re)drawing maps of security threats and constructing regions of insecurity (e.g. the Balkan region).

### **Migration Categories in the Balkans**

The Balkans has been depicted as a highly insecure region due to the fact that it is a gateway to the EU, there are many socio-economic problems arising from the democratization process of former east Europe and there is the recent Yugoslavian crisis. For that reason, the EU has promoted cooperation with the Balkans both as region of origin and transit (Peshkopia, 2005).

Balkans are one of the most interesting and challenging regions in Europe. There are huge internal differences in the region and the effects of transition have been particularly important. Migratory flows in the Balkans, which are not easily visible due to the inadequacies of the available statistical data, reflect the complexity of the political and socio-economic conditions in the area. There are different migration categories which affect the area: a) forced migrations, b) ethnic migrations, c) trafficking and d) economic migration.

During the last fifteen years the most important recorded migration flow is that of the asylum seekers from outside or within the Balkans. Although there is some evidence that most of those asylum seekers are Roma, the Yugoslavian crisis has created most of the forced immigration flows within the Balkans (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006). Effectively, the asylum seekers appear to be a route for unskilled or semi-skilled labour migration to the West. Secondly, ethnic migrations are a historical phenomenon of the early 1990s that mostly followed the break up of the communist states. More-

over, ethnic cleansing has been a feature of nation-building which came late in the Yugoslavian federation and led to political problems. Thirdly, despite the recent slow down, human trafficking in the EU remains mainly associated to illegal migrant routes passing through the Balkans. The still important role of informal economy networks in many Balkan states favours trafficking practices and structures. Finally, the growth of Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian communities in Italy, Spain and Greece has been really impressive. Meanwhile, recent labour migration from the Balkans has generally been considered more temporary and transit than permanent (Bonifazi, 2005). The result of tighter border controls and the Schengen zone has led to a two-tier status for border crossing: candidate/EU country or third country (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006).

In brief, the tighter border controls have been relatively effective in the management of migration. However, the size, routes and directions of migration flows in the Balkans have been modified as a response to the EU and national migration policy. Future developments appear to be connected to the political developments in the region and to the opportunities for greater integration of the Balkans into the EU. The complexity of migration has increased as a result of the closer linkages between the Balkans and the EU as well as of the interaction of national and supra-national policy actions.

### **The papers in this issue**

The three following papers form a special issue on "Migration and Human Security in the Balkans". The paper of **Tragaki** provides an overview of the possible linkages between migration and demography on one hand and human security on the other, recognizing the lack of a theoretical framework which would enable researchers to interpret the available data. **Geiger's** paper is a case study of the impact of the European migration policy in Albania which illustrates the problems of formulating a national approach to the management of migration in the Balkans. **Iosifides and Kizos** analyze empirical research findings collected in Western

Greece and point out the limited willingness of the locals, in a destination country, to develop close social relationships with Balkan immigrants.

**Verropoulou, Bagavos and Tsimbos** in their paper, compare the fertility patterns and differentials between migrant and non-migrant women in Greece. **Cliggett and Crooks** argue that the integration of anthropometric methods into migration studies enhances the ability of researchers to better understand the experience of migration. **Van den Bos and Achbari's** paper explores the strengths and weaknesses of different migration-networks in the Netherlands. Finally, **Faist** in his paper suggests that current debates around the migration and development nexus should be approached from a transnational angle.

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## MIGRATION AND HUMAN SECURITY

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